

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into a California strategic agricultural vision.

My husband and I are "second career" farmers. Our first career was in engineering, our second career is as winegrape growers. We utilize sustainable farming practices. Additionally, we buy nearly all of our food from the local farmers' market, including fruits, vegetables, breads, meat and fish. We recognize the importance of a local, sustainable food system.

I appreciate your consideration of my answers to the following questions.

- What is your vision for California agriculture by 2030?

I believe that California agriculture must be economically and environmentally sustainable and socially equitable. California is capable of producing all of the food needed by the residents of the state, as well as much of the nation. We must do so. Each community must produce, market and sell the majority of its agricultural needs locally. Areas that are blessed with excellent soil and climate conditions must also provide agricultural products to the remainder of the nation and into the international market.

The small farmer and the second career farmer will become key to providing local agricultural products. Small farmers can grow diverse crops and can supply local markets. Second career farmers will ensure that farming continues, since they enter the industry with a desire to farm and can better withstand the low potential earnings from farming.

We must have a legal, reliable labor supply. If people from Mexico want to work in the U.S., they should be able to do so legally.

- What will be the biggest challenge in achieving that vision?

The price of land, which is driven by a speculative value is one of the biggest challenges. People must recognize the value of agricultural land, and protect it for agricultural use. Also, the competition for water between agricultural and urban uses will become a crisis.

We must also transition away from the mono-culture version of farming. Agriculture needs to return to the small farmers who respect the land into the future. We need to emphasize organic, sustainable, and biodynamic farming. We must reduce our dependence on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

- In 2030, how has the public perception of agriculture changed?

People should have realized the critical importance of agricultural land to our food supply. Hopefully, that will be true.

- What is a "must have" in an Ag Vision for California”?

We must have strong policies preventing the conversion of agricultural land. We must protect our water supplies, particularly groundwater, for agricultural uses. We must support a local food supply. We must respect the small farmer and the second career farmer. We must have a legal, reliable labor supply. We must promote sustainable agriculture.

Thank you for listening.

Sue Luft
Templeton, CA